

Message Text

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17

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 222312Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1178
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: XK, VE, ES, HO, PN, NU

SUBJECT: VENEZUELA HONORS PRESIDENT SOMOZA

1. ON SEPTEMBER 22 PRESIDENT SOMOZA WAS PRESENTED THE ARMED FORCES CROSS OF COOPERATION, FIRST CLASS, BY VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR PENA PENA AND VENEZUELAN GN COMMANDER, GEN. PEREZ MADURO.

2. PRESENTATION SPEECH BY PENA NOTED SOMOZA IS ONLY FOURTH PERSON, AND ONLY FOREIGN CHIEF OF STATE, WHO HAS RECEIVED THIS DECORATION. REFERENCE WAS MADE TO MANAGUA HAVING BEEN SITE OF FIVE IMPORTANT REGIONAL MEETINGS IN LAST 30 DAYS: CENTRAL BANK MEETING OF CENTRAL AMERICA AND VENEZUELA; CONDECA; THE MEETING TO RESOLVE THE EL SALVADOR-HONDURAS DISPUTE; THE NAMUCAR MEETING; AND A MEETING OF CENTRAL AMERICAN AND PANAMANIAN LAWYERS' WIVES. PENA CITED THESE MEETINGS AS DEMONSTRATING AN ASPECT OF

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CENTRAL AMERICAN LEADERSHIP.

3. THREE OTHER NICARAGUAN GN OFFICERS WERE ALSO DECORATED WITH THE SECOND DEGREE OF THE ARMED FORCES CROSS OF COOPERATION INCLUDING PRESIDENT SOMOZA'S HALF-BROTHER AND GN INSPECTOR GENERAL, GEN. JOSE R. SOMOZA.

4. COMMENT: THE DECORATION UNDOUBTEDLY OFFERS PRESIDENT SOMOZA SOME POLITICAL CAPITAL WITHIN NICARAGUA, VENEZUELA AND THE REGION EVEN THOUGH OSTENSIBLY IT WAS A MILITARY DECORATION TO THE COMMANDER OF THE NICARAGUAN NATIONAL GUARD. ONE POSSIBLE EXPLANATION FOR THIS HONOR, OTHER THAN THAT OF STRENGTHENING FRATERNAL MILITARY BONDS, WOULD BE GOV PERCEPTION THAT COURTING SOMOZA IS IMPORTANT TO ITS INFLUENCE IN GREATER CARIBBEAN REGION.

EMB WELCOMES ANY COMMENT BY EMB CARACAS.

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